

The IPRC must consider placing your child in a regular class before it considers the option of a special education class. If the IPRC determines that your child's needs can be met in a regular classroom, with appropriate special education services, and if that is what you want, then your child must be placed in a regular classroom and receive the appropriate special education services.

What If the IPRC Meeting Can't Be Held Right Away?

Your child does not have to wait for an IPRC decision to receive a special education program or services. If there is a delay in holding the IPRC meeting, an appropriate program and services must be provided to meet your child's apparent needs in the interim.

What If I Don't Agree With the IPRC Decision?

In most cases, the process works smoothly. However, if you do not agree with what the IPRC has decided about the identification or placement of your child, you have the right to a follow-up meeting with the IPRC. If you wish, you can appeal the IPRC's decision – first to an appeal board set up by the school board, and then, if necessary, to the Ontario Special Education Tribunal.

How Does the School Plan My Child's Special Education Program?

If your child is identified as an exceptional pupil, the school principal is responsible for having an Individual Education Plan (IEP) prepared. Principals usually assign to one

teacher the task of coordinating the development, implementation, and monitoring of a student's IEP.

As a parent, you have the right to be consulted about and provide input into the development of your child's IEP.

The IEP is the key to an effective program for your child. It sets out your child's learning expectations for the current school year. In addition, it identifies the special education program and services that will be provided. With the plan, you will know what support and help you can expect for your child.

Ontario has set province-wide standards for IEPs. Your school has a copy of these standards. They are also available on the Ministry of Education website at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/iep/iep.html>.

Do I Have to Apply for Funding?

No. School boards receive funding to meet the needs of students who require special education programs and services. Funding for special education is not provided directly to individual pupils. Your board is responsible for delivering the program and services identified in your child's IEP.

What If I Have Concerns About My Child's Program?

If you are concerned about the special education program or services your child is receiving, the first thing to do is review your child's IEP. Does the plan identify and meet your child's needs? Have circumstances changed since the plan was prepared? You

should discuss any such issues with your child's teacher. Ask the school principal to participate in the discussion, if necessary.

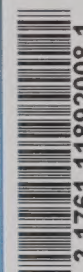
If the issue cannot be resolved at the school level, contact the school board. A special education coordinator or superintendent of special education may be able to help.³

Where Can I Get Further Information?

- Ask your school for a copy of the school board's *Parents' Guide to Special Education*.
- Visit the Ministry of Education's special education website at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html>.
- Contact a representative of one of the many associations involved in special education. Among these associations are the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, the Ontario Association for Community Living, and the Association for Bright Children. Representatives of these associations support parents in their discussions with teachers and school board officials. Many of the members of your school board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) are representatives of local chapters of these organizations. The names of the associations represented on your board's SEAC may be obtained from the school board.

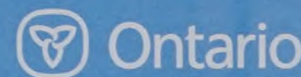
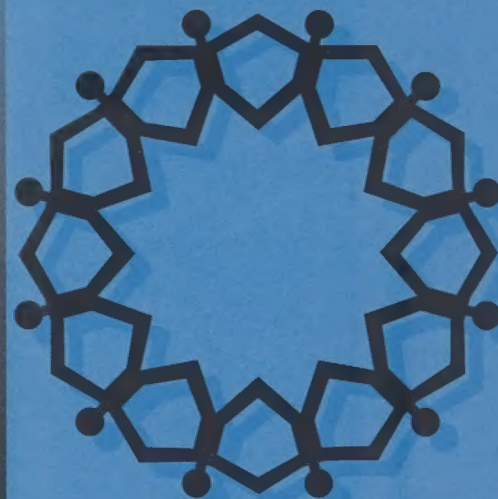
3. When a parent cannot resolve the issue in discussion with school board officials, staff of the nearest district office of the Ministry of Education (listed in the blue pages of the telephone book) may be able to assist.

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Special Education

Information
for Parents



Ministry of Education

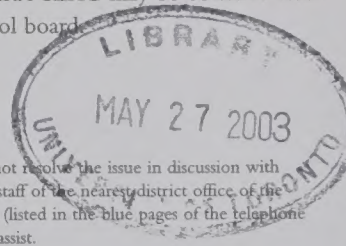
Higher Standards Are Putting Kids First

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This brochure answers questions that you, as parents,¹ often ask about special education. It also tells you how you can find out more. This information can help you to be a more effective partner in your child's education. Understanding the basics of special education makes it easier for you to be involved and to speak on your child's behalf. Your participation is important to your child's learning, achievement, and future.

What Is Special Education?

Every student needs support from teachers, classmates, family, and friends. Some students have special needs and require additional support to benefit fully from their school experience. These students may be formally identified as "exceptional pupils" by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).

Ontario's Education Act requires school boards to provide students who are formally identified as exceptional with special education programs and services that meet their needs. Depending on the student, a special education program can include modified curriculum expectations. However, with the right support, many students with special needs will meet the curriculum expectations for their grade.

What Is an IPRC?

Every school board has one or more IPRCs, which are responsible for deciding whether a student should be formally identified as exceptional and in need of a special education

program. (School boards *may* provide special education programs and services to students who have not been formally identified as exceptional.)

The IPRC also decides what type of educational placement is appropriate for each exceptional student. For example, while many students stay in regular classrooms and receive special education support, others may be placed in special education classes, which are usually smaller than regular classes, for all or part of their school day. These are only two of several alternatives.

Should My Child Have a Special Education Program?

Concerns about your child's progress in school may be brought to your attention by your child's teacher or the school principal, or you may have concerns of your own. For example, you may feel that your child's program is too difficult or that it is not challenging enough.

If you have concerns, the first step is to discuss them with your child's teacher and, if necessary, the principal. It may be helpful to go over some of your child's schoolwork with the teacher. As a result of such discussion and review, additional help may be provided for your child, or the teacher may adopt alternative teaching approaches to help your child learn. The teacher may also be able to suggest things you can do at home to support your child's learning at school.

However, such changes may not be enough. Your child may need the more intensive level

of support that can be provided through a special education program. Your school principal can explain the kinds of programs that are available in your school board and the process for referring your child to an IPRC. The principal should also give you a copy of your school board's *Parents' Guide to Special Education*, which provides more detailed information.

What Kinds of Assessments Will My Child Need?

In the classroom, teachers regularly assess the work of all their students in a variety of ways, including through tests, projects, and observation. In some cases, further assessment of a student may be advisable.

An IPRC may request additional assessments to assist the committee in determining your child's strengths and needs. Such a request does not mean that a child needs a special education program. In some cases, the results of assessments will suggest other ways in which the teacher, the school, and parents can provide the additional help a student needs. The purpose of all assessments is to provide information about your child that will result in a better education program – one that meets your child's needs.

There are various kinds of assessments. Some of the most common are:

- educational assessments
- speech and language assessments
- health assessments
- psychological assessments

These assessments must be carried out by qualified practitioners. A speech and language assessment, for example, must be carried out by a qualified speech-language pathologist. A health assessment might be carried out by your family doctor or by a specialist. Consent is required for health and psychological assessments and for some educational assessments.

Your school board may employ staff who are qualified to carry out some of these assessments, or your child may be referred to qualified practitioners in your community.

Can I Participate in Decisions About Special Education for My Child?

As a parent, you are part of the team. You have the right to take part in all IPRC meetings.² You will also have the opportunity to participate in planning your child's special education program.

Will My Child Be Put in a Different School or in a Special Class?

Most students with special needs attend school in regular classrooms. Help is provided to them in the classroom or through withdrawal from the classroom for periods of time during the day.

For some students with special needs, a program at a different school or in a special education classroom may be the best choice.

1. In this brochure, *parent* or *parents* refers to both parent(s) and legal guardian(s).

2. Students aged 16 and older also have the right to participate in IPRC meetings.